DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 063 774 EM 009 968

AUTHOR Roller, George E.
TITLE Exploring the Language of Films.
INSTITUTION Dade County Board of Public Instruction, Miami, Fla.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 19p.; Language Arts series; Authorized Course of Instruction for the Quinmester Program

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Course Descriptions; *Film Study; Photography; *Visual Literacy
IDENTIFIERS *Quinmester Program

ABSTRACT

A film study course written for the Dade County, Fla. public schools is described which covers techniques of motion pictures and their historical development. Techniques include the "language of pictures" (distance shots, angle shots, color, lighting, arrangement), the "language of motion" (camera movement, subject movement), and the "language of sound" (dialogue, narration, music, silence). Also included are an introduction to the optical and mechanical principles of motion picture operation. In discussing the techniques and history of the film, short film documentaries, and feature films are viewed and analyzed. This course description includes performance objectives and strategies for attaining them, a rationale for the course, and a list of resources, including books and films (sources of the films are indicated). No student level is specified. (JK)

ED 063774

TE
N-LJ

AUTHORIZED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE QUINMESTER PROGRAM

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Language Arts: EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE OF FILMS 5114.65
5115.65
5116.65

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION • 1971

EM 009 968

EXPLORING THE LANGUAGES OF FILMS

5114.65
5115.65
5116.65

Language Arts

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION
& WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Written by George E. Roller
for the
DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION
Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida
1971

DADE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. William Lehman, Chairman
Mr. G. Holmes Braddock, Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Ethal Beckham
Mrs. Crutcher Harrison
Mrs. Anna Brenner Meyers
Dr. Ben Sheppard
Mr. William H. Turner

Dr. E.L. Whigham, Superintendent of Schools
Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida 33132

Course Numbers
5114.65
5115.65
5116.65

COURSE TITLE: EXPLORING THE LANGUAGES OF FILMS

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A study of the techniques of motion pictures and their historical development. An analysis of the "language of pictures" (distance shots, angle shots, color, lighting, arrangement), the "language of motion" (camera movement, subject movement), and the "language of sound" (dialogue, narration, music, silence). Also included is an introduction to the optical and mechanical principles of motion picture operation; the advent of motion pictures, the silent era, the talkies, wide screen process, and the modern day film. Short films, documentaries, and feature length films are viewed and analyzed.

I. Performance objectives

A. Given selected photographs and films, the student will identify the various camera shots used, such as the low angle shot, high angle shot, fast motion shot, slow motion shot, rack focus shot, establishing shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up shot, and zoom shot.

B. After having examined selected photographs and films, the student will formulate hypotheses as to the reasons why the photographer chose the angle and distance that he did.

C. After viewing selected photographs and films, the student will identify techniques such as overexposure, underexposure, highlight, shadow, and effective use of color or black and white in order to analyze the effect they have upon the subject.

D. Given selected photographs, the student will describe the arrangement or artistic composition of the subject and the variables involved.

E. After viewing selected films, the student will differentiate between a straight cut, a fade-out-fade-in, a dissolve, a superimposition, a wipe, an iris, and a freeze frame.

F. After viewing selected films, the student will identify various camera movements, such as the boom shot, panning shot, tilt shot, and dolly shot in order to discuss critically the photographer's use of such movements.

G. After viewing selected films, the student will discuss critically the dynamic interrelationship of dialogue, narration, music, sound effects, and silence.

H. Presented with various pieces of film equipment such as 8 mm and 16 mm projectors and cameras with assorted lenses, the student will manipulate the apparatus in order to deduce the mechanical and optical principles involved in motion picture operation.

I. Given the various developments in motion picture history, the student will formulate hypotheses as to why each type of film is an outgrowth of its times.

J. Given instructions in filmmaking techniques, the student will create a film.

II. Rationale

A study of the language of film is an attempt to bring the visually-centered outside world into the traditionally sterile atmosphere of the print-oriented classroom. such a course fulfills a need in the curriculum of most schools. Because our society is visually-oriented, the public school must help to sharpen the student's faculties of perception in order that he will be more aware of the effect of mass media upon his life.

A significant portion of each student's life is spent in watching television and going to the movies. A course such as this will help develop criteria for aesthetic awareness and thus will help render the student more analytical and more critical of the mass media.

The study of film language will engender a cognizance of the art of filmmaking. The student will learn to appreciate special effects that the filmmaker utilizes. Perhaps even more significantly, he will learn to appreciate film as an art form that is just beginning to be appreciated as such by society. The student of film language will analyze films in much the same manner and employing similar techniques as those used in analyzing short stories, poems, or novels in traditional English classes. He will learn to discriminate between good and poor films and will be able to justify his reasons. After having studied the language of film, the student will have gained practical knowledge which will enable him to more effectively participate in his media-centered environment.

III. Course content

A. Language of pictures

1. Distance variation

2. Angle variation

3. Scene change variation

4. Other variations

B. Language of motion

1. Boom shot

2. Panning shot

3. Tilt shot

4. Dolly shot

C. Language of sound

1. Dialogue

2. Narration

3. Music

4. Sound-synchronization

5. Voice-over

6. Sound effects

7. Silence

D. Principles of motion picture operation

1. Mechanical

2. Optical

E. History of the motion picture

1. The silent era

2. The talkies

3. Wide-screen films

4. Documentaries

5. Modern innovations

IV. Teaching strategies

A. Objective: Given selected photographs and films, the student will identify the various camera shots used, such as the low angle shot, high angle shot, fast motion shot, slow motion shot, rack focus shot, establishing shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up shot, and zoom shot.

1. Show a film such as Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary.

2. Break class into small groups to define the types of shots mentioned in the film.

3. Read in class the chapter "Visual Language" in Exploring the Film.

4. Discuss either as a class or in small groups the concepts presented in the chapter.

5. Show any of a number of stimulus films such as Dream of Wild Horses and have students describe in writing as many examples of the shots under discussion as they can.

6. Have students study a series of photographs and have them decide on the most vital element of each picture. Then have them write a short composition leading up to the point of the picture. (see chapter on "Emphasis" in Stop, Look, and Write).

B. Objective: After having examined selected photographs and films, the student will formulate hypotheses as to the reasons why the photographer chose the angle and distance that he did.

1. Allow the students to examine books that contain a number of photographs, such as Stop, Look, and Write.

2. Have students find examples of various shots that have been discussed.

3. Have students analyze in writing the effect that is created by certain shots.

4. Divide students into groups and have them formulate reasons as to why the photographer chose the shot that he did.

5. Have a spokesman from each group present the conclusions from 4 (above) to the whole class.

6. Encourage students to find photographs (professional or amateur) that have interesting shots, and then have the students present in writing why the shots are good or poor and why the photographer chose the angle that he did.

7. Have students create a picture-essay with photographs of their own.

8. Have a professional photographer lend some pictures to the class for consideration. Then have the photographer defend his choice of shots and answer any questions.

9. Have students examine a series of pictures that show people's facial expressions. Suggest that the students concentrate on a photograph and then write a composition as to the character or personality of the person in the photograph. (See chapter on "Character in Stop, Look, and Write).

C. Objective: After viewing selected photographs and films, the student will identify techniques such as overexposure, underexposure, highlight, shadow, and effective use of color or black and white in order to analyze the effect they have upon the subject.

1. Have students bring in photographs that are examples of overexposure or underexposure.

2. Have the students divide into groups and suggest possible causes for the overexposure or underexposure.

3. Show a stimulus film such as Ski the Outer Limits or Omega and have the students look for effective examples of the techniques under discussion.

4. Review the section on lighting and color in the "Visual Language" chapter of Exploring the Film.

5. Show a film in black-and-white such as An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge and have students formulate hypotheses in writing of the filmmaker's reason for choosing to shoot the film without color.

D. Objective: Given selected photographs, the student will describe the arrangement or artistic composition of the subject and the variables involved.

1. Have students do research in artistic arrangement or composition.

2. Examine a book that contains famous paintings (re-prints) such as 100 of the World's Most Beautiful Paintings, and discuss composition in terms of the paintings.

3. Show the class photographs that are examples of good composition.

4. Show the class photographs that are examples of poor composition.

5. Review the section on arrangement in the "Visual Language" chapter of Exploring the Film.

E. Objective: After viewing selected films, the student will differentiate between a straight cut, a fade-out-fade-in, a dissolve, a superimposition, a wipe, an iris, and a freeze frame.

1. Show a number of stimulus films such as Catch the Joy or Junkdump.

2. Have students notice when one shot ends and another begins.

3. Have students measure the average number of seconds for each shot.

4. Take a film off the projector and have students examine how the film is composed of individual frames.

5. Divide the students into small groups and have them find as many different types of scene change as they can.

6. Have the students discover inductively the various types of scene change.

7. Have the students write an analysis of each type of scene change and its effect upon the frames being connected.

F. Objective: After viewing selected films, the student will identify various camera movements, such as the boom shot, panning shot, tilt shot, and dolly shot in order to discuss critically the photographer's use of such movement.

1. Reshow Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary to review camera movement.

2. Read as a class the chapter "Language of Motion" in Exploring the Film.

3. Show a number of stimulus films such as No Reason to Stay or Why Man Creates and have the students divide into groups and recall examples of the various camera movements that they saw.

4. Have students compare and contrast stimulus films on the basis of camera movement.

5. Point out that subjects should move across the screen in the same direction to establish progression toward a goal and to avoid confusion.

6. Have students find examples of number 5 (above) in various stimulus films.

7. Have students listen to a stimulus film such as Psychedelic Wet with the lamp turned off. Then have the students describe on paper the visual portion of the film as they saw it in their imagination.

G. Objective: After viewing selected films, the student will discuss critically the dynamic interrelationship of dialogue, narration, music, sound effects, and silence.

1. Read in class "The Language of Sound" chapter in Exploring the Film.

2. Show various stimulus films such as River Boy, The Toy Maker, or Short Vision.

3. Have students break into groups and describe the type of talking that was heard in the films. They should decide if the film contained narration or dialogue or both. If both, the students should determine the relative proportion of each.

4. Have students study a series of photographs involving people. Have the students then practice writing dialogue by imagining what the people are saying, as in the Stop, Look, and Write chapter on "Dialogue."

5. Have students study a photograph and then have them write down all the sounds that they would be hearing if they were actually the photographer taking the picture in that location at that moment.

6. Have students do research on sound processes such as sound-synchronization, voice-over, and sound effects.

7. Have students report to class their findings.

8. Have students find examples of sound-synchronization, voiceover, and sound effects in the stimulus films shown in class.

9. Have students classify the various types of music employed in the filmmaking process.

10. Have students analyze the use of certain types of music for specific situations.

11. Have students analyze the effect of silence in a film.

12. Have students discuss critically the total effect of the photography and the sound on the mood of the film.

13. Have students analyze the filmmaker's techniques in light of the message he is attempting to put across.

14. Have students create a sound track for a film. Show a film several times with the sound off. Have the students time the various sequences of the film and decide on the moods that are being conveyed. Then individually or in small groups (depending on availability of equipment and time) have them prepare a sound track on tape that can be played at the same time the film is reshown. After all sound tracks have been played, show the film with its original sound track.

H. Objective: Presented with various pieces of film equipment such as 8 mm and 16 mm projectors and cameras with assorted lenses, the student will manipulate the apparatus in order to deduce the mechanical and optical principles involved in motion picture operation.

1. Have students examine various pieces of film equipment such as projectors and cameras.

2. Show Photography: Anatomy of a Camera and Film.

3. Have students learn to operate a Video Tape Recorder.

4. Take the students on a field trip to Ivan Tors Studio.

5. Take the students on a field trip to a local television station.

6. Have students (either individually or in small groups) make a film by drawing or scratching directly on either film leader or old, discarded films. The students may draw and paint on clear leader or scratch the surface of black leader and old film. They learn to repeat each image a number of times for it to show on the screen as it is run through the projector. They learn to keep the images uniform and regular. Film leader is available for purchase at production laboratories or film supply stores.

I. Objective: Given the various developments in motion picture history, the student will formulate hypotheses as to why each type of film is an outgrowth of its times.

1. Show the students various films from different eras such as Film Firsts: The Primitives and When Comedy Was King.

2. Have the students do research on film history.

3. Have the students share with the class their observations and findings on film history.

4. Have the students examine each innovation in film technique in light of its historical setting.

5. Have individual or small groups of students prepare "You Are There" scenes concerning the historical development of motion pictures.

6. Have students read and bring to class movie reviews from the newspapers and magazines.

7. Discuss the reviews and the aspects of the films that are being criticized or praised.

8. Read the chapter on "Film Criticism" in Exploring the Film.

9. Discuss at least once a week any film that the students have seen in the theatre or on television. Have them evaluate the film orally as to photography, sound effects, etc.

J. Objective: Given instruction in filmmaking techniques, the student will create a film.

1. Read the chapter on "To Make a Film" in Exploring the Film.

2. Have the students do additional research in available libraries on filmmaking.

3. Show various student-made films that might be available.

4. Have the students prepare a storyboard for a proposed film. This would include all camera angles and distances, lighting and arrangement effects, scene change techniques, camera movements, and all sound effects including the dialogue used, music, etc.

5. Have students film the film with either a movie camera or a Video Tape Recorder.

6. Have students prepare soundtracks for their films on tape recorders if a regular movie camera (without sound-synchronization) is used.

7. Show to the class all films that the students have made.

8. Have the students evaluate the films.

V. Student resources

A. State-adopted textbooks: None

B. Non-state-adopted supplementary materials

1. Textbook

Kuhns, William and Stanley, Robert. Exploring the Film. Dayton: George A. Pflaum, 1968.

2. Reference materials

a. Anderson, Yvonne. Make Your Own Animated Movies. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1970.

b. Branston, Brian. A Film Maker's Guide to Planning. London: Allen and Unwin, 1967.

c. Cook, Canfield. Color Movie Making for Everybody. New York: Whittlesey House, 1949.

d. Feyen, Sharon and Wigal, Donald, ed. Screen Experience: An Approach to Film. Dayton: George A. Pflaum, 1969.

e. Fischer, Edward A. The Screen Arts: A Guide to Films and Television Appreciation. New York: Sheed, 1960.

f. Gessner, Robert. The Moving Image: A Guide to Cinematic Literacy. New York: Dutton, 1968.

g. Griffith, Richard, The Movies: The Sixty-Year Story of the World of Hollywood. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957.

h. Jinks, William. The Celluloid Literature. Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1971.

i. Kuhns, William and Giardino, Thomas F. Behind the Camera. Milwaukee: NAPCO Graphic Arts, Inc., 1970.

j. Leavitt, Hart Day and Sohn, David A. Stop, Look, and Write. New York: Bantam, 1964.

k. Manchel, Frank. When Pictures Began to Move. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

l. Mancelli, Joseph V. The Five C's of Cinematography: Motion Picture Filming Techniques Simplified. Hollywood: Cine/Graphic Publications, 1965.

m. McKay, Herbert C. Cine Titling and Editing. New York: Falk, 1932.

n. Pfragner, Julius. The Eye of History: The Motion Picture from Magic Lantern to Sound Film. Chicago: Rand McNally.

o. Schickel, Richard. Movies: The History of an Art and an Institution. New York: Basic Books, 1964.

p. Smallman, Kirk. Creative Film-Making. New York: Macmillan, 1964.

q. Spottiswoode, Raymond. Film and its Techniques. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951.

r. Taylor, Deems. A Pictorial History of the Movies. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943.

VI. Teacher resources

A. Textbooks - All of the student resources could serve as teacher resources.

B. Professional books

1. Culkin, John. How to Study a Movie. New York: Dell, 1970.

2. Kuhns, William. Themes: Short Films for Discussion. Dayton: George A. Pflaum, 1968.

3. Mac[illegible]ann, Richard. Film: A Montage of Theories. New York: Dutton.

4. McLuhan, Marshall. The Medium Is the Massage. New York: Random House, 1967.

5. McLuhan, Marshall. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969.

6. National Council of Teachers of English. The Motion Picture and the Teaching of English. Appleton-Century-Crofts.

7. Stewart, David C. Film Study in Higher Education. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1966.

C. Films (Available from Audio Visual Services, Dade County Public Schools.)

1.	"A"	1-05799
2.	American Time Capsule	1-01742
3.	Begone Dull Care	1-14386
4.	Boundary Lines	1-00314
5.	Cave Community, The	1-13870
6.	"C" Cloth	1-04213
7.	Clay	1-05800
8.	Dot and the Line, The	1-05820
9.	Film Firsts: The Primitives	1-31823
10.	Glass	1-05812
11.	Glory of Spring	1-02334
12.	Gumbasia	1-04143
13.	Hand, The	1-13819
14.	Hat, The	1-13835
15.	Nanook of the North (Part I)	1-30973
16.	Nanook of the North (Part II)	1-30975
17.	Occurence at Owl Creek Bridge	1-31807
18.	Photography: Anatomy of Camera and Film	1-13700
19.	Picture in Your Mind	1-10146
20.	Psychedelic Wet	1-00193
21.	Red Balloon, The	1-40015
22.	Reflections	1-13814
23.	River Boy	1-13827
24.	Seasons	1-10657
25.	Ski--the Outer Limits	1-30929

26. Two Men and a Wardrobe 1-13839

27. Wheels, Wheels, Wheels 1-04859

28. Why Man Creates 1-30758

D. Films available for rental

1. Pyramid Film Producers, Box 1048, Santa Monica, California 90406:

a. Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary. 15 min., C.

b. Catch the Joy. 14 min., C.

c. Hang Ten. 10 min., C.

d. Omega. 13 min., C.

e. Sky Capers. 15 min. C.

f. Turned On. 8 min. C.

2. McGraw-Hill Films, Eastern Office, Princeton Road, Hightstown, New Jersey.

a. Dream of Wild Horses. 9 min. C.

b. Elegy. 5 min. C.

c. Glittering Song. 12 min. C.

d. Place to Stand. 18 min. C.

e. Student, The. 12 min. C.

f. Sylvan Sketches. 11 min. C.

g. This is Marshal McLuhan: The Medium is the Massage. 53 min. C.

h. Triolet. 10 min. C.

i. Wall, The. 4 min. C.

3. Imperial Film Co., Inc., 4404 S. Florida Avenue, Lakeland, Florida 33803.

a. Genius Man. 2 min. C.

b. Junkdump. 16 min. C.

c. Mamako's Baggage. 20 min. B&W.

d. Man and His World. 3 min. C.

e. Revolution, The. 6 min. C.

4. Films, Educational Resources, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33620.

a. Chairy Tale, A. 10 min. B&W.

b. Claude. 6 min. C.

c. Daisy, The. 6 min. C.

d. Evolution of the Motion Picture. 20 min. B&W.

e. Eye of the Beholder: Point of View. 25 min. B&W.

f. Harvest of Shame. 53 min. B&W.

g. Neighbors. 8 min. C.

h. Problem, The. 10 min. C.

i. Time Out of War. 22 min. B&W.

j. Toy Maker, The. 15 min. B&W.

5. Films, Incorporated, 1144 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091.

a. Short Vision. 7 min. C.

b. Blow-up. 108 min. C.

c. No Reason to Stay. 29 min. B&W.

d. Place in the Sun. 7 min. C.

6. Learning Corporation of America, 1000 Nicholas Blvd. Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007.

a. Clown. 15 min. C.

b. Merry-Go-Round Horse. 17 min. C.

7. Bailey Film Associates, 11559 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90025.

   a. Fence, The. 7 min. C.

   b. Junkyard. 10 min. C.

8. Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 2581 Piedmont Road, N. E., P.O. Box 13857, Atlanta, Georgia 30324.

   a. Reflections on Time. 25 min. C.

   b. Fire Mountain. 12 min. C.

9. "The" Film Center, 915 12th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20005.

   a. When Comedy Was King. 82 min. B&W.

   b. The Golden Fish. 20 min. C.

10. Teaching Film Custodians, 25 West 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. 10036.

    a. American Film, The.

    b. Quiet One, The. 68 min. B&W.

11. Walter Reade 16, 241 E. 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016.

    a. Billy Liar. 96 min. B&W.

    b. Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner. 103 min. B&W.